

## Lesson 3 – How the Bible Came to Us

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.  
Matt. 24:35*

### 1. Where it Originated

- a. It originated in Heaven – Psalm 119:89, 152, 160

### 2. How it Came from God to Man

- a. It came from God (see Lesson 2) – Psalm 68:11
- b. God used human authors (listed are just a few examples)
  - i. Moses – Ex. 17:14; 24:4; 34:27
  - ii. Nehemiah – Neh. 1:1
  - iii. Solomon – Prov. 1:1
  - iv. Paul – Rom. 1:1; 2 Pet. 3:15
  - v. James – James 1:1
  - vi. Peter – 1 Pet. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1
  - vii. Jude – Jude 1
  - viii. John – Rev. 1:1

### 3. Ancient Copies We Have Today

#### a. Manuscripts

- i. Copies of the Scripture in the original languages. These copies had not gone through translation, but were copies of the original *autographs*, or copies of the copies.
- ii. There are more than 24,000 partial or complete manuscripts of the New Testament. One of the manuscripts we have today – a portion of the Gospel of John – is dated AD 130 – just 40 years after the Gospel was written (around A.D. 90).
- iii. Compare this to the manuscript evidence for other ancient writings that are generally accepted to be accurate.

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy in Existence Today	Time Span from Writing to the Copy in Existence Today	Copies in Existence Today
New Testament Manuscripts	50-95 AD	130 AD	40 years	5,300
New Testament Versions	50-95 AD	150 AD	60 years	19,300
Herodotus (History)	480 - 425 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	8
Thucydides (History)	460 - 400 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	?
Aristotle (Philosopher)	384 - 322 BC	1,100 AD	1,400 years	5
Caesar (History)	100 - 44 BC	900 AD	1,000 years	10
Pliny (History)	61 - 113 AD	850 AD	750 years	7
Suetonius (Roman History)	70 - 140 AD	950 AD	800 years	?
Tacitus (Greek History)	100 AD	1,100 AD	1,000 years	20

- iv. When it comes to evidence, no other ancient writing even begins to come close. There is more evidence for the authenticity of the Bible than of all other ancient writings combined.

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- v. In addition, Dean Burgon, a Bible Scholar from England counted 86,489 times the New Testament was quoted in the writings of the Early Church Fathers going back as early as A.D. 95.
- vi. In spite of this evidence, most secular universities are quick to embrace the other writings and deny the Scriptures. And *they* call *us* ignorant for believing the Bible! Wow!

#### b. Versions

- i. A *Version* is a translation – or a copy of a translation – of the Bible.
- ii. The earliest translations were in Syriac and Latin, dating back to AD 150.

### 4. How We Know Which Books Belong in the Bible

#### a. There are many other old books that people read

##### i. The Apocrypha

1. *Apocrypha* is from a Greek word, meaning “hidden”
2. The Apocrypha is a set of extra books that the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches added to their Bibles.
3. The Roman Catholic Church calls the Apocrypha the *Deuterocanonical Boons*, meaning “a second canon.”
4. Included in the Roman Catholic Bible
  - a. It was not included in the *Latin Vulgate*, the first Catholic Bible, translated by Jerome in A.D. 406
  - b. Jerome was under some pressure from the Bishop of Rome to put it in, but he held his ground, because he didn’t believe it belonged in the Bible.
  - c. The Catholic church likes the Apocrypha because 2 Maccabees 12:46 supports the Catholic doctrine of praying for the dead.
5. Books included in the Apocrypha
  - a. *Tobit, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), and Baruch*, as well as some parts of *Esther* and *Daniel*.
6. Martin Luther, whose theology was a mixture of Bible and Roman Catholicism, included the Apocrypha in his translation of the Bible with the notation that these books were “useful historical literature.”
7. The original King James Version of the Bible, which was translated under the auspices of the Church of England (also a mixture of Roman Catholicism and Biblical theology) published the Apocrypha in a separate section, showing that the translators did not consider it the same as Scripture.

##### ii. Pseudopigrapha

1. *Pseudopigrapha* means “falsely written”
2. A book written in a biblical style which is ascribed to an author who did not write it.
3. Many books were written this way. Biblical scholars have found convincing evidence they were all forgeries.
4. The Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Judas, The Acts of Paul, etc.

#### b. The establishment of the Canon of Scripture

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- i. *Canon* literally means “reed.” Reeds were used as measuring rods. The word *canon* came to mean “that which measures” or “that which is measured.”
- ii. The *Canon of Scripture*, therefore, means the body of books that have been universally accepted as being the authoritative Word of God by God’s people.
- c. Establishment of the Old Testament Canon
  - i. The 39 books of the Old Testament were originally 24 books. Some of the books were divided into smaller books around the time the Old Testament was translated into Greek in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C. There was no change in the content; just the division of the books.
    1. This translation was done by 70 Jewish scholars.
    2. It is called the *Septuagint* – the Greek word meaning “seventy.”
    3. It is sometimes called the LXX – for the Roman numeral for 70
    4. This is the Old Testament that Jesus used.
  - ii. These books were universally accepted by almost all Jews as the Word of God.
  - iii. The Apocrypha was not accepted by the Jews as being part of the inspired Word of God.
  - iv. The Council of Jamnia (A.D. 92) was a council of Jewish scholars that proclaimed their belief in which books were accepted as God’s Word.
    1. They did not select the books to be included.
    2. They formally acknowledged that which had been almost universally accepted. They merely “put it in writing.”
    3. They did not accept the Apocrypha.
    4. Important: this was not a decree to determine which books were inspired. It was a formal acknowledgment of the fact that the books of the Old Testament had been accepted by the Jews as the Word of God.
  - v. Tests of Old Testament Canonicity  
Canon closed around 425 B.C. Recognition settled A.D. 92
    1. Is it authoritative? Does it claim to be from the Lord?
    2. Is it prophetic? Is it written by a man of God?
    3. Is it authentic? Is it consistent with other revelation? Does it record facts as they actually occurred?
    4. Is it dynamic? Does the book come with the power of God?
    5. Was it universally received? Has it been accepted generally by the people of God?
- d. Establishment of the New Testament Canon
  - i. Almost universally accepted in the writings of the early preachers and scholars, sometimes known as “The Church Fathers.”
  - ii. The Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) “put it in writing.” They formally proclaimed that the books which had been universally accepted as Scripture were indeed the books that God had inspired.
    1. Again, this was not a decree to determine which books were inspired. It was a formal acknowledgment of the fact that the books of the Old Testament had been accepted by the Jews as the Word of God.

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### iii. Tests of New Testament Canonicity

The canon closed around A.D. 90; recognition was settled by A.D. 397

1. Apostolicity: Is it written by an apostle or someone closely associated with an apostle?
2. Antiquity: Is it traced to the time of the apostles?
3. Orthodoxy: Does its teaching agree with the apostolic teaching?
4. Reception by the churches: Did the Christian churches accept it?
5. Spiritual value: Did it have the power to change lives?

## 5. How it Came from the Ancient World to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### a. The Doctrine of the Preservation of Scripture

- i. God promised to preserve His Word –; Psalm 12:6-7
- ii. Jesus said the Word of God will never pass away Matt. 5:18; 24:35
- iii. This is important because this is how we know the Gospel for our salvation - 1 Pet. 1:23-25

### b. The History

- i. An ancient profession was that of a *copyist*. A copyist's job was to make copies – by hand – of existing documents.
- ii. Copyists took their job very seriously when making copies of God's Word.
  1. They would carefully proofread what they had copied and compare it with the original.
  2. Then they would count the number of words in their copies and compare them with the number of words in the original they were copying from.
  3. Then they would compare the number of letters in their copy to the number of letters in the original.
  4. If there was a discrepancy, they would destroy their copy and start all over again.
- iii. Even so, there are some variances among the copies over the many years and countries where the copies were made
  1. Almost all were minor – a different word order or slightly different grammar. (In ancient Greek, the order of the words did not affect the meaning of the sentence. It was the *inflection* or form of the word that gave the sentence its meaning).
  2. None of the other variants in the manuscripts affect any major doctrine of Christianity.

### c. History of the English Bible

- i. Wycliffe Bible – 1384
  1. Although John Wycliffe was not martyred for translating the Bible, his work was condemned 30 years after his death, and his bones were dug up by the Catholic Church and burned in contempt.
- ii. Tyndale Bible – 1526
  1. William Tyndale was strangled and burned to death by the Catholic Church because he translated the Bible into the common language of the people..
- iii. Coverdale Bible – 1535
  1. Miles Coverdale had to flee England twice because of persecution.
- iv. Matthew Bible – 1537

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1. Two of the three translators of this Bible were burned at the stake for their work with the Bible.
- v. Great Bible – 1539
  1. Authorized to be placed in churches where people could visit and read the Bible.
- vi. Geneva Bible – 1560
- vii. Bishop's Bible – 1568
- viii. Rheims New Testament (Roman Catholic) – 1582
- ix. Douay Old Testament (Roman Catholic) - 1609
- x. Authorized King James Version – 1611
  1. The biggest selling book in the history of th world.
- xi. English Revised Version – 1881
- xii. American Standard Version – 1901
- xiii. Many modern 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Century Translations

## Lesson 3 – How the Bible Came to Us

### Review from Lesson 2

1. Define Inspiration
2. Define Verbal Plenary Inspiration.
3. Why is Verbal Plenary Inspiration important?
4. What are some of the evidences of the Inspiration of the Scriptures?
5. Define Scripture, the Scriptures
6. Define Autograph as it applies to the Bible
7. Define Versions
8. Define Manuscripts